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divines, which, like shafts of light, shoot forth through the invisible way and bid him follow after them.

For will anything short of the infinite stir the infinite in man? Will he not ultimately have to take refuge perforce in the Source of All, and must he not feel, if the trust and peace and security (which nothing can mar) are ever to be his portion, that not only the highest interests of the nation and of humanity, but the highest interests of the universe itself (of which he is an integral part, and in which he lives and moves and has his being) call to him unresistingly for his utmost devotion? And must he not learn to cry when the fierce struggle within him goes on between the vaster and the narrower claims: "Not my will, O Universe, but thine be done!"

Ill-stated though they be, these are the questions which confront the educational world to-day. And, under our changed conditions, they have not yet been grappled with. These changed conditions are, that whereas education was originally the prerogative of the priest, it is now, in the main, that of the laity, and that the laity has never yet learned to explore deeply, and, having explored, to trust the deepest intuitions of its own soul.

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## THE DOCTRINE OF REINCARNATION ETHICALLY CONSIDERED.

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IT is a somewhat saddening reflection that in spite of the presumable millions of years of human life on this planet, there is no general belief as to whence we come or whither we go, or indeed as to why there is any coming or going at all. The meaning and purpose of life are still beyond the scope of our science; they are matters of faith at best and not infrequently of despair. The pain

of the world, the transparent ruthlessness of nature, the amazing inequalities of human existence, the seeming grave injustice in the lives of the majority, are, as far as our reason goes, as great enigmas to us to-day in the twentieth century as they have ever been so long as we have any trace of human history. In such a state of affairs we cannot afford to cast aside without a hearing any theory that attempts seriously to throw light on the darkness.

The general hypothesis of preëxistence (under which the special doctrine of reincarnation falls) does not, it is true, solve the fundamental problems, but it pushes back some of the initial difficulties. It furnishes an ampler ground for the development of the individual soul than the cribbed, cabined, and confined area of one short earth-life, and by providing a stage or series of stages for the acts and scenes of the age-long drama of man-soul prior to its present existence, permits us to entertain the notion of a law of moral causation conditioning our present relation to circumstance in a way that does not clash with our innate sense of justice.

This general hypothesis of preëxistence connotes the idea of metempsychosis in prior states of existence, but by no means necessarily includes the special doctrine of reincarnation or transcorporation proper, that of repeated incarnations in physical bodies on this earth. It is somewhat necessary to insist on this distinction at the outset, for the two theories are not infrequently confused in the popular treatment of the transmigration-doctrine, especially in the manipulation of Biblical texts and in invoking the authority of Patristic writers. Many Bible texts require the presupposition of a belief in preëxistence, but very few, and these open to serious question, permit us to suppose a belief in reincarnation. Some of the Fathers again, it is true, are open advocates of preëxistence, but all without exception reject reincarnation, which was in great favor with some of the heretical syncretic schools of the early Christian Gnosis,

as well, of course, as with the Orphics, Pythagoræans, Platonists, and Hermeticists. Origen, for instance, who is philosophically the greatest of all the Fathers, but whose views were subsequently condemned, while strenuously rejecting the reincarnation interpretation of even the Elias-John the Baptist saying, enthusiastically champions the cause of preëxistence in a theory the main features of which may be outlined as follows:

Souls were originally spiritual, equal, free, the first creations of God whose sole cause of creation was his own goodness. In the beginning there was no ground of difference between them; it was the gift of moral freedom, which included personal self-determination, that gave occasion to difference. The souls had thus bestowed on them the choice either of becoming like unto God by imitation of him, or of declining from their original purity and blessedness in neglect of him. Here the supposition is that the original conditions of all were equal, and thus there can be no question of favoritism or injustice. The declension of the pure spiritual existences into the state of separated souls is supposed to have been due solely to their own self-will. Why, however, they should have preferred to fall away; why they should have chosen something other than God, when nothing other than God's goodness is supposed to have existed to choose from; why the exercise of the liberty of choice which was presumably given them to use, and was the creative gift of a provident all-seeing deity, should have been immediately attended with the constraints of an ever-growing necessity, operated by the same will of God, who is thus represented as taking away with one hand what he gave with the other,—all this is in no way explained, and we are left with the root-problem as far from solution as ever.

The world-process, according to this theory, is regarded as a series of states of cooling and condensation, corresponding with the cooling of the ardor of the primal spirits for the divine goodness, who thus became sepa-

rated souls falling into ever greater and greater distinction and remoteness from the Divine. We have accordingly the notion of a series of phases of existence from spiritual to material states, the latter of which verge gradually downwards or condense from the extremest subtlety to the gross materiality of our present world, in which the persistently self-willed souls are finally incarnated. This last most narrowly constrained form of embodiment Origen regards as a final beneficent provision of divine wisdom to enable the souls, under the direst necessities of the sternest facts, to move more rapidly toward the accomplishment of their fore-ordained final destiny, which is the regaining of the pure spiritual state of their origin, in which alone they can ever find lasting peace.

It is evident that such a theory leaves out of account all notion of a positive purpose in the world-process in and for itself. The world-process is conceived of solely as a means of rectification; it is brought into operation owing to the mischoice of the souls. The whole process is for the correction of a fault, and not for the divinely purposed production of a positive or novel good. This much, however, is gained, that there is no imputation to deity of starting souls in unequal conditions, as far at any rate as their nature and environment are concerned. Nevertheless, we are asked to believe that our present conditions are self-caused and morally determined by our own original free-choice of the worse steadily persisted in, and we cannot help asking in return in self-defence: What can possibly be the nature of the choice which determines the proclivity of souls in the very beginning; and how can there be, on this hypothesis, any real moral responsibility except for the creator of the power of choosing? The created soul itself cannot of itself be the creator of evil, for that would constitute it a second God. We are thus forced to conclude that, in spite of Origen's optimistic belief that all would eventually be saved, his essentially pessimistic view of the cause of the declension

of the souls and of the ever-deteriorating conditions of their preëxistence deprives the world-process of all adequate motive and purpose, and leaves us with the problem of justice as far from solution as ever.

But this theory of Origen's and other theories involved in similar theological presuppositions by no means dispose of the doctrine of preëxistence. Coming down to our own days we find that there are those who, while they frankly abandon all questions of ontology as insoluble, and prefer to begin where they find themselves in the world-process, still hold to the idea of preëxistence as the most hopeful hypothesis. Convinced of the fact of evolution, they reject the pessimistic doctrine of a fall, and regard the past of the soul optimistically as a scale of ascent, and the present life as a stage leading to ever superior states of existence either on other planets or in other conditions of life higher than are possible on this earth. This view, however, as far as I am aware, has never been worked out systematically; it is rather an alternative hazarded by those who dislike the idea of repeated incarnation on earth, when brought face to face with traditional views of the theory of transcorporation.

We may then proceed to consider the doctrine of reincarnation proper, in which there has been a remarkable renascence of interest in the West of recent years. Omitting for the moment all reference to the crudest forms of the belief as found among widely scattered primitive folk of the past and of the present, it may be of interest to note that the historic problem of its simultaneous occurrence in systematic form in the comparatively highly cultured nations of India and Greece in the seventh and sixth centuries b. c. has recently been submitted to a thoroughgoing methodical investigation in Germany. In a recent work<sup>1</sup> and in a series of subordinate studies, Dr. Robert Eisler has argued, at great length and with an amazing wealth of literary and archæological testi-

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<sup>1</sup> *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt: Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Urgeschichte des antiken Weltbildes.* München (Beck), 1910, 2 vols.

mony, that the sources of Hellenic mystical cosmology are not to be sought in Greek folklore; on the contrary, they are to be traced to a quite unmistakable high cult of a supreme deity of a pantheistic and henotheistic nature (the ‘All and One’ as the famous *logos* of Heraclitus has it), the philosophical and mystic concept of Endless Time and Boundless Space, with the allied notion of a world-embracing Necessity or Inevitable Law, very distinct traces of which are to be found in all the Ionic philosophers from Pherecydes and Thales onwards. This cult of Chronos-Adrasteia (or of the *Æon*) of Ionian Asia Minor is from the very beginnings of philosophy found in closest connection with the cult of the Orphic mysteries, which on their side are found to show clear signs of the remains of the Prehellenic religion of archaic Asia Minor and of Crete. Moreover, the essentially fatalistic and pessimistic mood of Orphic-Pythagorean doctrine,—with its belief in a ceaselessly revolving wheel of Becoming, and an endless series of transcorporations of the World-Soul in ever new world-formations, together with the consequent dogma, essentially interwoven with it, of individual metempsychosis with its mystical, psychological, and moral doctrines,—is shown to be entirely in keeping with the root-notion of this high cult of the God of Eternity. It is accordingly claimed, as a corollary to this demonstration, that the professors of this creed, which was based on the conviction that the whole course of nature was governed by the circular motion of the heavens under the supreme ordering of eternal law, were the first to formulate the indispensable and fundamental presupposition of all research into the laws of nature.

Moreover, Dr. Eisler has traced back the Zervanic form of the æon-cult, which was so dominant an element in the religion of Mithras, to an early period of Iranian tradition prior to the Persian expansion. It may very probably have been this expansion, with the subsequent conquest of Northern India under the Achæmenidæ, that led to the introduction of this systematized body of doc-

trine into Indian thought; for it is precisely at this period that we there meet with the Time-cosmogonies together with the allied tenets of the wheel of Becoming and of metempsychosis,—ideas which can no more satisfactorily be derived from the native elements of Vedic folk-faith than they can in the West from Greek folk-religion. A further advantage is that this general thesis is the only one that provides a satisfactory explanation of the admittedly close resemblance between Orphic and Pythagorean and Indian thought. All the indications of origin thus seem to point in a Central Asian direction. And if this should prove to be really the case, we should be able to link up from the Far Eastern side the in some ways very similar conceptions of the early Taoist thinkers, contemporaneous with the beginnings of philosophy in China, with their notions of a deity beyond space and time, of a universe of order and law, and of perpetual transformations of the soul in a flux of becoming, which have been hitherto generally supposed to be genetically derivable from India.

It would thus appear that the general notions bound up with the conception of reincarnation came into clear and systematic definition with the simultaneous rise of the philosophical spirit in East and West in the seventh and sixth centuries b. c. Philosophically considered, the doctrine requires the presupposition of inevitable law in the universe, based on the observation of the natural phenomena of alternation and recurrence, exemplified in times and seasons. The apparent revolution of the heaven with all its host of fixed stars was thought of as a perpetually turning wheel or celestial lathe or circle of necessity, while the sun and moon and planets were heavenly types of other modes of the same inevitable law. If day and night, summer and winter, follow each other and recur with invariable iteration, so must it be, they thought, with life and death. As the sun, the giver of light and life, set and rose again, passing below the fixed, flat earth, on its journey through the invisible spaces beneath, to

come forth renewed each morning, so was it thought the soul of man at death journeyed through invisible spaces and returned again to live on earth. To-day we know that this is but the apparent motion of the sun, and that it does none of these things; helpful analogies, however, may very well be based on the naïve observations of the senses as well as on the correction of sense by reason.

Though Plato and Aristotle and their followers refused to adopt the Pythagorean view of the planetary system which in some respects anticipated the results of modern research, they advanced to very lofty conceptions of the nature of the soul, and the psychology of the Alexandrians especially became highly developed. Thus, for instance, among the later Platonists we find Plotinus and Porphyry and their successors arguing that to speak of the soul's 'going to Hades' (or to the 'Invisible') was a complete misunderstanding of its nature, for the soul itself was not a body or something that could go or be moved, but was on the contrary the cause of motion. The apparent going to Hades or dwelling in the Invisible of the soul was referred to a change of embodiment into subtler media than the elements of the physical body, and the soul was thought of not as being *in* a body, but conceived of rather as a principle of vitality, activity, and mentality, energizing through the intermediary of a subtle substance or essence which surrounded every body it might use as a sense-instrument, as it were in an encompassing sphere. The transformations of embodiment were all referred to and thought to take place in this simple continuing essence, which constituted as it were the *seminarium* or psychic matrix of all bodies of the individual soul. This vital formative essence was regarded as the principle of embodiment, or the essential protoplasm, by which every body of the soul was determined, and into which the powers and characteristics and experience of the life of every body were refunded on the dissolution of its elements. Just as in modern times, on the borderland of physics, we have broken up the atom

into a system of electrons which are regarded rather as 'charges of electricity' than as purely material units, so with the ancient speculations attempts were made to bridge the gap between soul and body, mind and matter, life and substance, between potentiality and actuality, latency and operation, noumenon and phenomenon, idealism and realism.

The idea of a vital substantial continuum, or primal or causal 'vehicle' of the soul (if that which is contained can be called the 'vehicle' of that which contains), the treasury of all the activities and sensations of the many bodies derivable from it as secondary vehicles, is found in a highly developed form in India as well as in Alexandrian psychology. It is this 'spiritual' or 'causal' unitary nature which in conjunction with the subtle and gross elements of the universe develops, from within, the successive bodies of the soul both subtle and gross. In a way these bodies might be compared with the temporary protusions or pseudopodia of the most primitive protozoon known as the amoeba or proteus animalcule, the protusions in the case of man being organisms for sense and activity, which vary from the greatest material complexity in the case of the physical body to the greatest simplicity in the case of the primal protoplasm. The physical body is furnished with its appropriate organs of sense and action, but activity and sense are to be referred ultimately to the soul in its primal substantial nature, which is regarded as the true unitary sensory. This primal origin of all embodiments and substantial means of all sensation and experience, is often spoken of as the soul itself, and forms the subject of many a legend, myth and mystery-rite in East and West. It seems to be a necessary presupposition in any theory of reincarnation; nevertheless, the most numerous believers in the doctrine reject it.

The reference is, of course, to Buddhism which has verged to the extreme of negation in its psychology, either in its efforts to formulate a purely dynamic theory, or more probably as the outcome of its intransigent polemic

with Brahmanic theology, which asserted a substantial continuum between reincarnations, and that, too, in spite of its favorite theory of illusionism or the non-reality of all things as set over against the absolute reality of the Supreme. From the start Buddhism with contemporaneous Brahmanism assumed reincarnation as a fundamental fact. The one object of the Buddha was to teach the means of freedom from the necessity of transmigration, the ceaseless round of birth and death, due to the inevitable concatenation of cause and effect. From the start Buddhism, like Brahmanism, assumed states of existence in invisible worlds. Existence in such states, as well as on earth, was conditioned by the law of karma, the law of the deed. At death every human being (and every other sentient being for that matter) is immediately born into another state of existence, and what that state is, and the nature of his birth in that state, depend absolutely on his karma or actions (deeds, words, and thoughts) in the past life on earth. Nevertheless, we are at the same time asked to believe that the most characteristic doctrine of the Buddha was that of the non-existence of a self whether individual or universal. Put crudely, this non-self notion (*anatta*) asserts dogmatically: There is no soul; there is no God.

Now if the soul has no true being, and if there is no living personal continuum between the phases of embodiment in various states of existence and between two earth-lives, no string, as it were, on which to thread the beads of experience, no substrate of any kind, no ground of persistence, no immortal life to make possible the sequence of mortal existences, it seems somewhat preposterous to speak of karma as a law of moral causation as the Buddhist strenuously insists on doing. It is difficult to attach the idea of moral responsibility to a simple chain of causation, to a 'stream' of activity, or to speak of such a 'stream' incarnating. According to Buddhist notions, an entirely new personality is born, a different person altogether, the 'soul' being as new as the elements brought

together to form the body, and as perishable as the association of these elements and the rest of the constituents of a non-physical nature combined by karma to form a human life. There is really no entity, no self, no soul, no person of a continuing nature. All that comes over is a complex of activities conditioning a form of existence characterized by the false notion of an 'I.' It is, however, to be doubted whether even the traditionally authentic teaching of the Buddha can be legitimately interpreted in this absolutely negative sense. The answers to the questionings of the disciples on this point seem to leave the matter open, and suggest that the Buddha was averse from being pinned down to a simple yes or no on a matter of such great metaphysical difficulty, seeing that both subject and object can both be regarded as everchanging phases of a unitary self that in final analysis and in its deepest being is one with the universal reality. In other respects, however, and contradictorily enough if the negation of self is persisted in, Buddhist teaching very securely fixes the responsibility on the shoulders of this "false notion of an 'I,'" so that for all practical purposes, as far as the ordinary unsophisticated man is concerned, the metaphysical subtleties of the doctrine fall well into the background, and the popular teaching directly refers the responsibility for all his deeds to the living agent. The defenders of the Buddhist doctrine of absolute negation must thus be left to extricate themselves from the dilemma as best they may, and the battle of the absolute illusionists and comparative illusionists may be left to the lovers of Buddhistic and Brahmanistic metaphysics.

In the West a far more positive view has obtained in the past and holds the ground to-day. This western positive view, however, also agrees that the basic storage of experience should be eventually referred to a deeper and less personal or restricted self than the comparatively, ephemeral and superficial 'I' of one stage of existence only; it asserts a mystic 'I' of practically

immeasurable possibilities, but it holds that to deny self utterly is to turn the whole scheme of binding and loosening into the absurdity of an essentially purposeless process, and asserts that liberation regarded in any sense as the escape of an illusory self from illusory conditions equally robs the consummation of all idea of a positively purposed design. Perfect freedom, on the contrary, it holds, should connote the idea not only of removing or escaping from any or all limitations at will, but also the notion of the power to assume all or any limitations at will. And, indeed, contradictorily enough, that is precisely the supreme ideal of the northern tradition of Buddhism as represented by the schools of the Great Vehicle. In contradiction to the negative freedom preached by the southern tradition, in the schools of the Little Vehicle, the northern doctrine teaches the grandiose and superb ideal of the Great Vow,—the renunciation of the bliss of freedom so long as one single sentient creature remains in a state of bondage. The consummation of this utter self-sacrifice for the love of all creatures can hardly, one would imagine, be ascribed to a soulless stream of activity or chain of causation; it surely demands the presupposition not only of a supreme reality, but also of subordinate realities actualizing themselves in ascending stages of moral perfectioning; thus giving full satisfaction to the deepest needs of the heart, that look in vain for any comfort to the cold abstractions of the head. Such a sublime ideal, or indeed any lofty ideal of a moral nature, requires the postulate of an immortal progressively responsible entity, though we may all differ as to how the nature and manner of being of that entity should be defined. Responsibility connotes a self-conscious will, and a self-conscious will connotes a personal being; but the idea of personality of a being endowed with the possibility of developing through every grade of self-realization carries us far beyond man, and both christology and buddhology, from different standpoints, have exhausted themselves in trying to grapple

with the mystery of the superhuman person. It is in man that personal self-consciousness begins; in man that the change from the animal self of exclusion to the moral self of inclusion is gradually wrought; and in man that this evolving moral self-consciousness wins to ever deeper and deeper self-realization until human becomes consciously superhuman, and finally divine. According to this expectation, it can only be when man reaches to a divine state of consciousness that there is any true understanding of beginning and end. For it is the divine spirit alone, which is both the producer and product of evolution, that can reveal the secret of its own being and at the same time be the reason of its own becoming.

Here, in the midst of process, we are forced to begin with ourselves, as did the greatest of the teachers of reincarnation when he contemplated the process and sought to solve the riddle of sorrow and suffering. The ultimate reason he could not give, but its immediate origin he believed was to be found in the persistent clinging to the state of separated existence, which he conceived of as conditioned by a ceaseless concatenation of cause and effect, as it were an endless chain of causation, of which every link was the inevitable sequence of the one before it, and the last of the series the equally inevitable coupling with the first. To this wheel or circuit of separate existence, this necessity of ever-becoming, man was bound so long as he thirsted for this life of separation and persisted in referring all things to himself as apart from the rest of being. But this theory was the outcome of deep philosophical reflection and strenuous moral purification; the simple idea of reincarnation did not arise in this way. In its simplest form the notion of the return of the soul to this earth is found far apart from all philosophical consideration or over-beliefs in widely scattered primitive tribes, and must, it is reasonable to conclude, be due to elementary experience of some sort. It seems improbable that it could have been simply guessed at in so many widely separated cases; to refer it to pure coin-

cidence in this way is to abandon its origin to chance pure and simple. Seeing, however, that dream and vision and contacts with the invisible of all kinds, low and high, are responsible for so many other religious beliefs, not only among primitive folk, but also among civilized mankind, the origin of the belief in reincarnation also may very well be referred to so familiar a cause. The spirits of the ancestors, it was believed, waited to be born again into the tribe. In dream and vision they were seen waiting, and it then required little effort of the imagination to recognize the individual characteristics of departed worthies or chiefs reappearing in the lives of descendants. The great could be recognized, the little passed again without recognition into the mass. But though it is probable that the germ of the belief is to be sought in this direction, it leaves unexplained why some tribes should have interpreted dream-experience in this manner and not others. Among believers in reincarnation, however, we find innumerable instances of those who claim to remember incidents in previous existences on earth. Indeed, in the highly elaborated psychology of both Brahmins and Buddhists, the power of recollecting past births at will is postulated as one of the definite acquirements of man in his gradual perfectioning on earth, and many saints are said to have attained to this power. The case of Pythagoras in the West will also recur to everyone. In the present renascence of interest in the West, also, similar claims, not only to sporadic memories of this nature, but also in a few cases to purposive recollection of series of past incarnations are being made. Many are inclined to believe that the truth of the doctrine will gradually be established on this basis. But so far such assertions have been submitted to no competent investigation. They have not yet reached the dignity of being included even among the obscurer phenomena of abnormal psychology as recognized material for psychical research. Truth to tell, most of these claims are transparently absurd, and may be safely referred to a mild species of

megalomania. But apart from these pretensions on the part of obscure individuals to the heritage of the past greatness of others, there is an abundance of material that requires collection and unprejudiced investigation. One thing, however, is clear, without any further investigation, from the fact that the claimants are of every sort and kind, that memories of this nature, even if they are what they purport to be, have nothing whatever necessarily to do with moral character.

Meantime the normal mind being manifestly without such memories, normal opinion in the West at any rate considers that the whole question of reincarnation is entirely disposed of on the ground of lack of memory; and, of course, this is the first objection that must occur to the mind of even a child, and is constantly confronting the believer in reincarnation. Even if by chance an adherent of the normal opinion is forced to consider a case of reminiscence of this kind, he prefers to describe it as an instance of 'ancestral memory,' rather than accept the hypothesis of a popularly so discredited notion as metempsychosis; and this, too, though some famous names in the West in the last two centuries have been associated with belief in the doctrine.

But as to this patent general lack of memory, we must not forget that the normal power of recollecting the impressions made on normal consciousness even in a single life-time, is exceedingly imperfect, and that, too, with the best of memories, and that we cannot be altogether sure that imperfection of memory or even regular lapses of memory is an evil. Every night we experience an enormous loss of memory of our physical selves, though we are most probably by no means unconscious in some other part of our being; and it is precisely because of this lapse of physical consciousness that our bodies are generally refreshed and invigorated. How very feeble, comparatively, the power of recollecting the experiences of waking consciousness is even when the attention has been fixed upon them, needs no laboring, while the vast

majority of sensible impressions pass us by unnoticed and are entirely beyond the power of even the best normal memory to recall. The most recent researches of psychology have demonstrated that in highest probability every single sensible impression, whether attended to or not, is stored somewhere and somehow in the subconscious, and that complexes of such unnoticed impressions can, under abnormal conditions, be reproduced with such vividness that they seem to be the experiences of a totally different personality. We may thus be persuaded that even in our present life we possess vast stores of latent 'memories' that are immeasurably beyond all our powers of normal recollection. Why, then, should we expect to recollect, except under very extraordinary circumstances and in abnormal or extranormal states, deposits of memory that are *ex hypothesi* stored far deeper than the records of the experiences of our present life?

The lack of power to recall the pictures of detailed incidents of past experience, however, leaves us still in possession of the result of that experience, in the form of increased ability and faculty. The trained musician, for instance, plays with mind free from all recollection of the memory-details of the past labor of learning notes and exercises; his fingers remember, his subconscious mind has stored the experience, practice has given birth to facility, to instinctual capacity. His deeper self has stored away every single detail of his former training; but what advantage is it to have these in his practical mind, when detailed experience is summed up in the now instinctual capacity of his trained body? The recollection of detail by the practical mind would mar the power of execution, if indeed it did not entirely inhibit it. *Mutatis mutandis*, some such process may be thought to take place in the still greater being of the reincarnating entity; the activities of a single life may be regarded as the practice days of the immortal player for the gaining of experience of life and the development of ever increasing ability. Here the recollection that really counts

is the power to awaken latent faculty and to bring into play the previously acquired powers of understanding. It is not, however, to be supposed that all the detailed faculties, capacities, and powers that lie stored away in the whole man can be brought into play again in a single life on earth; there is not time enough for that. But they are all there latent and can be called into play with far less training of the body than would otherwise be the case if present circumstances should demand their exercise.

But man is not only an intellectual, artistic, fabricative, and executive life, he is also a social and moral being. The arrangements of human society, its sanctions and prohibitions, are presumably gradually evolving toward some clearer reflection of a far more vital economy and of a spiritual estate to which the soul is native. Within this general notion, believers in reincarnation are at one with believers in the one-life theory in holding that the regulative principle of the moral order is summed up in the inspired utterance that man inevitably reaps what he sows. Now this is evidently not the case in a single life on earth, or only to a very limited extent. The reincarnationist then might rest his case solely on the necessity of rebirth into similar conditions, that is, on earth where alone the sowing has taken place, in order to make this law an absolutely effective truth. He, however, holds, together with the adherents of the one-life theory, that human existence is continued in other states of existence than that of earth-life, and that these states are states of immediate result in which the harvest of the past life is fully gathered, the grain threshed out and winnowed from the chaff, and stored in the treasury of moral experience. It is a searching process of internal transformation, in immediate vital personal experience, in which the great lesson is learned of how intimately the life of the individual is bound up with the life of his fellow-creatures, with the life of the universe, and with the divine life. This theory then, as well as the one-life

point of view, assigns to the human soul states of purificatory processes and of bliss and refreshment in after-death conditions, but it knows nothing of the dogma of eternal punishment.

We may, however, dispense with any consideration of the traditional mythological settings and symbolical picturings of such states, which still in both East and West stand as the age-long legacy of prior popular crudities, nor need one stay to discuss the conceptions of modern spiritism which for the most part are of an exceedingly secular and bourgeois nature. It is enough to suggest that, in modes appropriate to the nature of the operations of the soul of things, clothed upon with the personal reminiscences of the past life, the soul undergoes, as it were, the psychical process of digesting the intake of its recent experience of earth-life. In a state of extended and enhanced sensitivity, in which any or every past deed or word or even thought can be represented in vivid consciousness, with the added experience of sympathetically realizing its effects on others in a way that is quite impossible on earth with a body limited by the normal sense-modes, the soul learns the moral lesson of the inevitable nature of the law of action and reaction. The various stages and modes of this internal process of self-analysis and moral purification presumably differ very considerably, as they must be *ex hypothesi* of an intensely personal nature; but the main idea is the expansion of the nature so as to include a consciousness of the complement or result of the deeds of the past life. The stages of moral schooling include states both of suffering and of bliss, and finally give place to an open-eyed realization of the value of both orders of experience, when the soul momentarily returns to itself. What necessitates the further return of the soul into earth-life from this state of illumination is by no means clear; renewed life on earth can hardly be regarded as a continuation of the personal punishment-and-reward process, as is generally supposed, for that

has already been experienced. The soul itself most probably consents to this return, knows that there is a positive purpose in the process, and longs for a renewed opportunity of taking part in that process. For the soul in itself, in its divine nature, is a free agent and not a creature of fate. Such, at any rate, is the persuasion of all Christians and of many another saving cult; and such was the teaching in the past, of many a school of religio-philosophy in the West, and notably among the Alexandrian believers in reincarnation. The latter held accordingly that purification in the after-death states was no real credit to the soul, for there it was purified by the compulsion of necessity and not from choice. True and lasting purification, they held, must be self-wrought, for the soul is a divine self-motive essence. It is only in earth-life that this self-initiated self-purification can be effected and the soul win to realization of its divine nature on the most strenuous battlefield of actuality. The soul, therefore, we may conclude, willingly submits to reincarnation on earth to carry out the divine purpose which is innate in its inmost essence, and of which it is accordingly fully aware only in its deepest self, free from all limitations of time and space, as a conscious member of the divine family. And indeed the famous Platonic 'reminiscence' of the soul is precisely this recalling to mind or bringing into consciousness on earth the memory of this divine state and purpose, and not the recollection of past states of existence on earth.

According to this line of thought, then, it is the life on earth that really counts, for here is the meeting-place of the above and the below, of the within and the without, the ground of really vital struggle, in which the world-process is most intensely engaged in realizing the world-purpose. It is therefore the state in which the individual soul can best win to ever greater realization of the divine purpose, for it is here in the very midst of the divine process. The soul in earth-life may thus be thought of, not as a criminal or a child of fortune, but as

a warrior or divine adventurer, and the wounds which it suffers in one life may be regarded as the powers that it wields in the next; and so it grows in strength, and beauty, and virtue until it is finally perfected and passes from the man-stage into that which is greater than man. It is thus said in one of the great myths of the soul, that the stature of the angel in heaven,—the one who is elsewhere said perpetually to behold the Face of the Father, or who is in the immediacy of the eternal presence of the mystery of being,—grows with the struggles of its twin on earth, of the man who fights the good fight in the mystery of existence in time and space; until at last earth is raised to heaven and heaven is brought down to earth, and necessity and freedom embrace in the consummation of the divine purpose.

According to this high over-belief the main lessons that life has to teach seem to be the essential non-separability of the life of the individual soul from the life of the whole, and therewith the power of the individual life to enjoy communion with the divine life. The soul's greater destiny includes both necessity and freedom. Freedom resides in the power of the soul to change its individual attitude with regard to the circumstances of life, which are the necessary expressions of the greater life of the whole. If instead of looking on circumstances as vexatious and inimical limitations, we regarded them as ever-fresh opportunities, and indeed the most immediate means of bringing us to ourselves, we might embrace them gladly as the ever-changing moods of our destined complement and fulfillment. For with this change of attitude our personal separative love and will would unite with the all-embracing will and love, and we should be at one with our own greater destiny and with that of the rest, and so find ourselves in conscious coöperation with the divine purpose.

However this may be, the doctrine of reincarnation in its most highly developed form holds out the hope of our realizing some day in the midst of the conditions of

greatest struggle the meaning of that struggle. To have the life-conflict explained theoretically in some shut-off and preserved heaven-state where the struggle itself is no longer present, would be a solution of an academic rather than of a practical nature. To leave this life forever with all or most of its problems unsolved has all the appearance of abandoning the struggle in irretrievable defeat, and this can hardly be a satisfactory outlook for a noble soul. On the contrary, the idea of the possibility of returning to do better another time, and yet again and again to learn the whole lesson, and above all to help others more easily to learn it, is a conception that should appeal very strongly to the practical instincts of the strenuous laborers for improving the present conditions of human existence on earth.

The doctrine of reincarnation thus provides many with considerations that give satisfaction to their sense of justice and their conception of orderly progress, and holds out the promise of eventual conscious coöperation with the world-process on the most practical plane of life. It cannot, however, be said that this theory has produced any higher types of humanity than the one-life theory. Both forms of belief have their long lists of saints and geniuses, of accomplished souls and heroes of all kinds, and also their endless records of ordinary and of quite undeveloped folk. It is also true that in the past, and even in the West, the reincarnation-doctrine has not been made to yield quite so practical an outlook as has recently been given it, and as has been insisted on in this paper; while in the East it has been the favorite doctrine of peoples for the most part naturally inclined to fatalism and *laissez faire*. On the contrary, the one-life theory has been the favorite doctrine with races who are naturally exuberant in activity, and who have thus found an additional incentive to moral effort in the belief that all is staked on a single throw. We boast ourselves to be more practical in the West; and after all, we say, that is what really counts in arriving at any judgment

of value. But are we so sure of what is the most truly practical? Modern civilization increases our needs and diminishes our contentment; year by year we get further away from nature; culture does not keep pace with material progress, and moral and spiritual advance, if anything, lags still farther behind. This is hardly practical, at any rate if the true happiness of man is dependent upon harmonious development, and if the teaching of the greatest of mankind in East and West is held to be practical.

The doctrine of reincarnation, in its highest aspect, looks to a social end and not to the consummation of an isolated perfection. It is not to be thought that the individual soul has to acquire all arts and sciences, capacities and abilities, or pass through all experiences; the part cannot possibly perform the function of the whole. But what the wise soul can do is to develop that all-attractive power of harmlessness, and that positive power of fellow-feeling, of sympathy and compassion for all other souls and the whole creation, which are the passports to the adytum of every separated life and of life itself; till finally all separation is removed and the treasures of experience and capacity, knowledge and attainment, of all separated souls and of the soul of life itself are laid at the feet of the eternal victor who is also the perpetual self-sacrifice.

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### THE ESSENCE OF TRAGEDY.

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PLATO, at the end of the "Symposium," represents Socrates as forcing Aristophanes and Agathon to admit that the genius of comedy is the same with that of tragedy, and that the true artist in tragedy is an artist in comedy also. The suggestion is tantalizing. Plato